

V. REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 USC 102 (e) as being anticipated by Kreiser et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,953,338). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kreiser teaches an apparatus for thermally treating substrates in a chamber in which the substrates are placed on support elements. The apparatus includes support elements that are provided with substrate support tips that are formed by a first cone and a second cone. The first cone has a greater opening angle than does the second cone. The support elements are movable essentially parallel to a plane of a substrate. Also, the support elements are movable radially relative to a central axis of the substrate.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a wafer support tool for heat treatment that includes a support member holder and a plurality of wafer support members. Claim 1 recites that the support member holder is in a form of a flat panel and has a central location point and a flat upper surface. Claim 1 also recites that the support member holder extends radially from the central location point with the support member holder having a plurality of slit-shaped pinholes formed into the upper surface, disposed apart from the central location point in a radial direction, angularly spaced apart from one another and extending radially relative to the central location point. Further, claimed 1 recites that each one of the plurality of wafer support members has a fitting portion sized to be slidably received in a respective one of the plurality of slit-shaped pinholes and a contact portion integrally connected to the fitting portion and sized to contact and project upwardly from the upper surface of the support member holder when respective ones of the fitting portions are slidably received in respective ones of the plurality of slit-shaped pinholes.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as amended and discussed

above. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 2-7, 11, 12 and 19-22 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 8-10 and 13-18 are canceled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 and 13-18 are rejected under 35 USC 102 (b as being anticipated by JP 02139935. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

JP 935 teaches a semi-conductor manufacturing device that prevents slip damage on a semiconductor wafer. The semiconductor wafer is supported with a movable support portion formed of a ball or a movable pin. A susceptor is installed between tungsten halogen lamps and includes at least three recesses opened toward the upper surface in a vicinity of the internal periphery thereof. The susceptor freely rolls and carries a ball as a movable support section in each recess. The ball protrudes from the upper peripheral surface from the interior of the recess and supports the semiconductor wafer. Contact between the semiconductor wafer and the ball is achieved on a curved surface of the ball so that there is reduced bending strain along the point of contact at high temperature. Also, the ball can roll within the recess of the susceptor.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as amended and discussed above. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 13-18 are canceled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 13-22 are rejected under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by Kawamura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,204,887). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kawamura teaches a wafer holder, a wafer support member, a wafer boat and heat treatment furnace, which are capable of sufficiently suppressing slip dislocations, without lowering productivity and at low cost, in the high temperature heat treatment of silicon wafers. The wafer holder is characterized in that the wafer holder is composed of a wafer support plate and three or more wafer support members mounted on the wafer support plate. Each of the wafer support members has a wafer support portion or more. At least one of the wafer support members is a tilting wafer support member which has a plurality of upward-convex wafer support portions on the upper surface and is tilttable with respect to the wafer support plate. The wafer is supported by at least four wafer support portions.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as amended and discussed above. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 2-7 and 19-22 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 8 and 13-18 are canceled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Newly-added claims 23 and 24 also include features not shown in the applied art.

For instance, claim 23 recites that each one of the plurality of slit-shaped pinholes is rectangularly shaped and has a width extending perpendicularly relative to the radial direction with the width of each one of the plurality of slit-shaped pinholes being at least substantially uniform. Claim 24 recites that each one of the plurality of wafer support members is operative to tilt when received in a respective one of the plurality of slit-shaped pinholes such that, when the fitting portion tilts towards the central location point, the contact portion tilts away from the central location point and, when the fitting portion tilts away from the central location point, the contact portion tilts towards the central location point.

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this Amendment is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to set forth further arguments and remarks supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers.

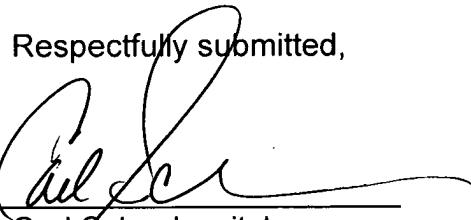
Furthermore, for any instances in which the Examiner took Official Notice in the Office Action, Applicants expressly do not acquiesce to the taking of Official Notice, and respectfully request that the Examiner provide an affidavit to support the Official Notice taken in the next Office Action, as required by 37 CFR 1.104(d)(2) and MPEP § 2144.03.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

By:


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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal

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